

The excellent photography of Thomas D. Mangelsen is accompanied by a “story” courtesy of Fred Bruemmer, and there is a certain degree of correlation between images and text. Although the dust jacket announces the text to be a “story,” Bruemmer, an Arctic veteran of some 35 years, offers a species of fiction grounded in facts and details, a “story based on...many years of observation [and] scientific knowledge” (p. 13).

Bruemmer’s omniscient narrative is actually three narratives that complement one another, producing an integrated overview. One of the story’s strands focuses on the peregrinations of a polar bear mother and her two cubs, while another follows the life of a mature adult male and the arctic fox who accompanies him. These elements are embedded in a further, framing narrative that concentrates on Arctic history and natural history, as well as providing geological, anthropological, archaeological, and ethnographic background material. During the course of his fiction, Bruemmer takes the reader through a full-year cycle in the lives of his subjects. This scheme provides Mangelsen ample opportunity for some visually stunning portrayals of the seasons, while the reader learns the yearly patterns of polar bear behaviour.

The book is easygoing (and certainly easy on the eye), informative, and accessible, with many passages and images relating to other Arctic animals. Bruemmer’s effortless style is clearly the product of an intimate knowledge not only of the polar bear, but also of the Arctic generally. Where he really scores highly is in his ability to underpin his fiction with accurate detail. For example, he uses exact Inuit terms, subtly and succinctly revealing their meanings to the reader without the need for stodgy explanations, or recourse to endless glossaries.

The story is a fitting accompaniment to the striking visuals. Images range from approximately 35 mm contact print size to double-page spreads of about 18 x 56 cm. The photographs themselves represent a mere fraction of the 85 000 images of polar bears and other Arctic wildlife from which they were chosen. These range in scale from vast Arctic land- and seascapes to detailed close-ups of flora and fauna. Their subject matter is similarly broad, and pictures of Canada geese, arctic foxes, snowy owls, willow ptarmigan, snow geese, and arctic ground squirrels (to name but a few) are found among the expected pictures of polar bears. In addition, the text provides a handy index to the photographs, enabling beginners to identify the names of animals and birds.

Not surprisingly, in a book of this kind, Tom Mangelsen’s imagery largely eschews depictions of nature “red in tooth and claw.” Frank Craighead’s Foreword is right to stress the “mood” rather than the realism of the work: “You can be sure that Tom’s bear images and other arctic photographs...accurately portray the mood of the polar bear and its world” (p. 11). Indeed, there is no disputing that Mangelsen’s images (as one would expect from a BBC “Wildlife Photographer of the Year”) are technically excellent, unusual, and perhaps better seen than described.

Polar Dance is a monumental work and an impressive achievement. That it is neither a serious academic work nor a work of science makes it something of a breath of fresh air. For the novice general reader, it provides a rich, attractive introduction to the polar bear and its Arctic environment. Even the hardboiled polar specialist would have to be very hardboiled not to enjoy the images in this book. It is a text to be dipped into, pored over, and revisited many times.

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THE ALASKA-KLONDIKE DIARY OF ELIZABETH ROBINS, 1900. Edited by VICTORIA JOAN MOESSNER and JOANNE E. GATES. Fairbanks, Alaska: University of Alaska Press, 1999. ISBN 0912006994. xviii + 390 pages, illus., maps, bibl., index. Softbound. US\$22.95.

The publication of diaries of the Klondike and Alaska gold rushes has become an almost monthly event during the centenary celebrations over the last few years. All of these diaries contribute to our understanding of the people who participated in the gold rushes and their daily lives. A few, however, stand out from the rest for their erudition or acuteness of observation. These, for example E. Tappan Adney’s *The Klondike Stampede* and Elizabeth Robins’ recently released *Alaska-Klondike Diary*, provide sharper focus and more detailed insights into the events, places, and people of the period.

Elizabeth Robins, an American-born actress and writer for both stage and popular, but “correct,” journals, was an unusual visitor to the North. Her theatrical career was centred in Europe, but she made frequent visits back to proper circles on the eastern seaboard. Widowed at 25, she made her career her life. The only exception was her especial fondness for a brother, Raymond, who had headed off to Alaska during the gold rush and become embroiled in the controversial and often violent municipal politics of Nome. In the spring of 1900, Elizabeth went to visit her brother and see the North.

Her diary of this trip, with its lengthy, detailed entries and illustrations selected from her excellent photos, provides colourful insights into many aspects of northern life. Three interesting elements for this reviewer were her observations on women’s lives, her careful record of interviews she had with prominent Northerners, and evidence of a more complicated view of the frontier and American life.

Elizabeth Robins met many women during her trip. These ranged from social equals whose husbands ran mining companies, to upright women whose fortunes had

collapsed through the unscrupulous activities of their husbands, to missionaries, adventurous young women doing secretarial work, and some women whom she just didn't like. Robins carefully notes the prospects and strategies of each woman and how they are making out in the dynamic environment of the North. Her descriptions of the vicious treatment of a young immigrant cook's assistant at a tent restaurant made me wince. She visited Sister Winifred of the Sisters of St. Anne at Holy Cross Mission during an epidemic. Her account of this visit, painted in sobering yet romantic word pastels, ends in the Sisters' garden, with a promise to send along both flower seeds and a rose bush (p. 224–225).

To help pay for the trip, Robins prepared articles for various publications. To this end she actively sought out longtime Northerners and interviewed them. She does a nice job of conveying the character of each interview through description of setting, even noting accents and pronunciation. Her account of a meeting with Captain Hansen of the Alaska Commercial Company provides a fascinating and highly informal history of the sealing industry company, its relations with the "Eskimos," and the despoliation of both when short-sighted American entrepreneurs broke the company's monopoly (p. 200–207). A similar report, of a casual conversation on a Yukon riverboat about the Alaska boundary dispute, was published as an article in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1903. The editors have thoughtfully included five of Robins' interesting articles describing northern life and gold mining in addition to the boundary piece.

In Nome, Robins also observed the freedom of the American frontier in practice. Although the idea of a free life at the frontier has been boiled down to a few trite phrases well ensconced in American mythology, Robins presents a far more complex vision of life on the edge. She enters with, and retains through her whole stay in the North, a strong consciousness of her class and the importance of proper introductions to people. However, her standard of what is proper is clearly flexible: by the end of her time in the North, her gregarious nature and the interesting people she meets have eroded the nature of the necessary introduction and connection. Nevertheless, she recognizes the hierarchical nature of society. On landing at Nome she observes, "All landed here free and equal from the common life of the ships. Twenty minutes and some were masters and others slaves of the circumstances awaiting them...—the old story." And arriving at her hotel, she notes the Black chambermaid: "It was curious to realize what a sense of home and "good old days" the black visage brought to this far-away land" (p. 70–71). At the same time, she notes with approval the community's support for the rights of an elderly Black woman defending her town lot from White claim jumpers. Clearly the freedom of the frontier was far from a simple, single truth.

In addition to her thoughts on the effect of the frontier, Robins was an acute observer of all facets of daily life in Nome. Her descriptions of church services, community

meetings, mining operations, and even a one-night pub crawl through the less savoury establishments of Nome, capped by a description of one man still suffering the effects of the previous nights celebrations, are wonderful excursions into the past. She must have spent hours every week composing her thoughts and recording them so completely in her diary. And the effort has preserved a wonderful set of experiences for us.

Elizabeth Robins' record of her trip to Alaska and Yukon provides a colourful and interesting view of the country. The photos and maps, the brief biographical summary of her life, and the detailed annotations of unfamiliar textual references provided by the editors are a splendid re-creation of the period through the eyes of a well-educated, yet open and interested observer on northern affairs.

REFERENCE

ADNEY, E.T. 1994. *The Klondike Stampede*. [1899]. With a new introduction by Ken Coates. Vancouver: UBC Press.

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INCORPORATING THE FAMILIAR: AN INVESTIGATION INTO LEGAL SENSIBILITIES IN NUNAVIK. By SUSAN G. DRUMMOND. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7735-1671-9. x + 189 p., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$39.95.

In the past two decades, countless reports, articles, and books have investigated issues relating to the delivery of justice for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. These publications have documented the contrast between justice values of Aboriginal peoples and European immigrants to this land, strategies for reforming the dominant justice system to accommodate these different values, and the legal bases for Aboriginal justice initiatives and systems. (See, for example, Monture-Okanee and Turpel, 1992; Inuit Justice Task Force, 1993; and Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996.)

Susan Drummond has entered this fray with a book that, from my standpoint as a legal scholar, adopts a unique perspective on the issues at hand. In her "investigation into legal sensibilities in Nunavik," Drummond draws on diverse disciplines, including philosophy, ethnography, cartography, psychology, and literary analysis, as well as more traditional legal analysis.

The book jacket does not tell us much about Drummond, other than the fact that at the time of publication, she was